

# Zensar

## **Estimate change**

TP change

**Rating change** 



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Bloomberg	ZENT IN
Equity Shares (m)	226
M.Cap.(INRb)/(USDb)	104.5 / 1.3
52-Week Range (INR)	475 / 202
1, 6, 12 Rel. Per (%)	14/100/59
12M Avg Val (INR M)	506

#### Financials & Valuations (INR b)

2023	2024E	2025E
48.5	50.9	57.2
7.6	13.3	12.8
3.3	5.5	6.0
14.4	24.1	26.1
-21.6	68.0	8.2
131.5	144.4	158.4
11.6	17.6	17.4
8.6	14.8	14.6
34.8	40.4	40.4
32.9	19.6	18.1
3.6	3.3	3.0
17.2	10.8	9.5
1.1	2.1	2.2
	48.5 7.6 3.3 14.4 -21.6 131.5 11.6 8.6 34.8 32.9 3.6 17.2	48.5 50.9 7.6 13.3 3.3 5.5 14.4 24.1 -21.6 68.0 131.5 144.4  11.6 17.6 8.6 14.8 34.8 40.4  32.9 19.6 3.6 3.3 17.2 10.8

# Shareholding pattern (%)

As On	Mar-23	Dec-22	Mar-22
Promoter	49.2	49.2	49.1
DII	15.8	11.5	14.8
FII	10.5	10.8	16.6
Others	24.5	28.6	19.5

FII Includes depository receipts

CMP: INR461 TP: INR470 (+2%) Neutral

# Margin improves but growth remains a concern

### **Maintain Neutral on fair valuation**

- ZENT reported 1QFY24 revenue growth at 1.3% QoQ in constant currency (CC), in line with our estimate. Deal TCV rose 23% YoY to USD154m but fell 12% sequentially after a seasonal high in 4QFY23. ZENT again surprised on the margin front with a 420bp gain sequentially to 18.7% (est. 15.0%), as it trimmed employee and sales expenses despite revenue growth in 1Q.
- While revenue growth in 1Q was in line with our estimate, the management remains cautious about the near-term demand environment, citing challenges in verticals like H-Tech and Consumer and pressure on discretionary spending. ZENT management does not see the situation improving at least for the next two quarters. Given the challenging near-term macro outlook, especially in key verticals like Hi-Tech, Manufacturing and Consumer (56% of 1QFY24 revenues), we expect FY24 revenue growth to remain muted (est. 2.5% YoY CC). Revenue growth should improve in FY25, as the expanded service portfolio starts delivering on growth. We factor in a modest USD revenue CAGR of 7.5% over FY23-25E.
- On the margin front, the company reported another stellar performance in 1QFY24, with a 420bp sequential improvement in EBITDA margin. Though margin improvement was strong, it was aided by a 100bp one-time gain from R&D credit and a 150bp gain from cuts in sales and marketing expenses, both of which are expected to reverse in 2QFY24. Moreover, 2Q will also see the impact of wage hikes. The management continues to target mid-teens EBITDA margin and reinvest above that level for growth. With strong margin gains, offshore effort shift and moderation in attrition (-390bp), we expect ZENT to deliver 16.8% EBITDA margin in FY24. We increase our FY24/FY25 EBITDA margin estimates to 16.8%/16.3% from 14.7%/15.2%, resulting in an INR EPS CAGR of 35% over FY23-25E (partially on low FY23 base).
- The stock has run up meaningfully (2.3x in last six months) on the back of margin improvement. Given near-term challenges in a significant portion of its portfolio and limited upside on margins, we see current valuations at 18xFY25E EPS fair. Our TP of INR470 implies 18x FY25E EPS. Retain Neutral.

# Strong margin beat led by sharp opex decline

- Revenue declined 1.6% YoY in CC terms. EBIT grew 115% YoY, while PAT fell 108% YoY.
- Revenue grew 1.3% QoQ in CC terms to USD149.2m (in line). Deal TCV came in at USD 154m (-12% QoQ/+23% YoY).
- EBITDA margin at 18.7% (+420bp QoQ) beat our estimate by 370bp, as employee costs declined 4% QoQ (270bp impact) and S&M declined 18% QoQ (150bp impact).
- PAT at INR1,562m (+31% QoQ) beat our estimate of INR 1,182m, led by operating margin expansion and higher other income.
- Cash and Investments stood at USD233.8m (18% of MCap).

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## **Key highlights from the management commentary**

- In BFSI, ZENT saw good growth owing to new deal wins in the past few quarters and as enterprises look for low-cost vendors like ZENT.
- Clients are scaling back on budgets, delaying projects, cutting discretionary spending and reducing scope for projects in Hi-Tech, Manufacturing and Consumer. The management expects the demand environment to remain soft for these verticals. On the other hand, ZENT has a good deal pipeline in these verticals, which could get converted in the near term.
- The near-term demand environment is unlikely to improve over the next two quarters. The management remains optimistic about long-term demand.
- ZENT expects to maintain margins in the mid-teens going forward and re-invest above that level for growth.

#### Valuation and view

- The weakening global environment and worsening economic conditions in key economies are adding to the challenges faced by the company in near- to medium-term growth recovery.
- The stock is trading at 18x (FY25E), in line with its small-cap peers. We believe ZENT's growth story is already factored into the price and it is trading at full valuation, leaving limited upside potential from its current level. Maintain Neutral.

<b>Quarterly performanc</b>	e											(INR m)
Y/E March		FY2	<b>!3</b>			FY2	24		FY23	FY24E	Est.	Var.
	1Q	<b>2</b> Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2QE	3QE	4QE			1QFY24	(%/bp)
Revenue (USD m)	156	155	146	148	149	154	157	161	604	621	150	-0.2
QoQ (%)	1.8	-0.6	-5.9	1.1	1.2	2.9	1.9	3.1	6.1	2.7	1.4	-16bp
Revenue (INR m)	12,034	12,346	11,976	12,127	12,272	12,596	12,834	13,235	48,483	50,936	12,292	-0.2
YoY (%)	28.5	17.5	8.6	5.1	2.0	2.0	7.2	9.1	14.2	5.1	2.1	-16bp
GPM (%)	26.6	25.3	27.4	31.9	33.6	32.2	33.2	33.6	27.8	33.1	32.0	162bp
SGA (%)	15.3	16.8	16.1	17.4	14.9	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.4	16.3	17.0	-213bp
EBITDA	1,361	1,054	1,349	1,759	2,301	1,940	2,105	2,219	5,523	8,564	1,844	24.8
EBITDA Margin (%)	11.3	8.5	11.3	14.5	18.8	15.4	16.4	16.8	11.4	16.8	15.0	375bp
EBIT	871	562	852	1,408	1,878	1,499	1,656	1,755	3,693	6,788	1,463	28.4
EBIT Margin (%)	7.2	4.6	7.1	11.6	15.3	11.9	12.9	13.3	7.6	13.3	11.9	340bp
Other income	149	209	183	209	224	139	141	146	750	649	135	65.7
ETR (%)	26.4	26.3	26.1	26.2	25.7	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.2	25.9	26.0	
Adj. PAT	751	568	765	1,193	1,562	1,212	1,330	1,407	3,277	5,510	1,182	32.1
QoQ (%)	-42.1	-24.4	34.7	55.9	30.9	-22.4	9.7	5.8			-0.9	
YoY (%)	-25.6	-39.8	-15.8	-8.0	108.0	113.3	73.8	17.9	-21.2	68.1	57.4	
EPS (INR)	3.3	2.5	3.4	5.2	6.8	5.3	5.8	6.2	14.4	24.1	5.2	31.7

#### **Key performance indicators**

Y/E March		FY2	3			FY24	FY24			FY24E
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	1Q	2QE	3QE	4QE		
Revenue (QoQ CC %)	3.1	1.6	(5.3)	0.4	1.3	2.1	(5.3)	0.4	10.3	
Margins										
Gross Margin	26.6	25.3	27.4	31.9	33.6	32.2	27.4	31.9	27.8	27.8
EBIT Margin	7.2	4.6	7.1	11.6	15.3	11.9	7.1	11.6	7.6	7.6
Net Margin	6.2	4.6	6.4	9.8	12.7	9.6	6.4	9.8	6.8	6.8
Operating metrics										
Headcount	11,559	11,250	10,845	10,563	10,540				10,563	
Attrition (%)	28.1	26.3	22.8	19.8	15.9				19.8	
Offshore Rev.	41.6	42.9	44.7	46.4	48.0				43.9	
Key Verticals (YoY USD %)										
BFSI	78.2	43.3	28.6	18.4	19.9				38.4	
Manufacturing	20.0	6.2	2.9	(7.4)	(10.0)				4.7	
Retail	19.3	(1.4)	(13.0)	(21.0)	(9.8)				(5.5)	
Key Geographies (YoY USD %)										
North America	23.8	11.0	(2.1)	(3.9)	(6.3)				6.5	
Europe	25.9	8.2	3.0	(8.3)	1.6				6.1	
South Africa	10.8	0.1	1.0	4.4	(0.8)				3.9	

# Key highlights from the management commentary

## **Growth and outlook**

- ZENT reported revenue growth of 1.3% QoQ CC, led by Manufacturing and BFSI.
- New service lines, such as experience and advance engineering, are gaining strong traction. ZENT has also launched its generative AI offering, AI Buddy, on the Azure marketplace.
- Order book was strong in 1QFY24 at USD154.2m, aided by multiple new wins and healthy renewals. ZENT saw good traction in new deals from existing clients thanks to cross-selling initiatives.
- Europe saw strong sequential growth on the back of deal ramp-ups.
- In BFSI, ZENT saw good growth owing to new deal wins in the past few quarters and as enterprises look for low-cost vendors like ZENT.
- Clients are scaling back on budgets, delaying projects, cutting discretionary spending and reducing scope for projects in Hi-Tech, Manufacturing and Consumer. The management expects the demand environment to remain soft for these verticals. On the other hand, ZENT has a good deal pipeline in these verticals, which could get converted in the near term.
- The current demand environment remains uncertain amid a softening in spending and delayed decisions from clients. However, ZENT has significantly increased its addressable market in the last few quarters by launching new offerings.
- The near-term demand environment is unlikely to improve over the next two quarters. The management remains optimistic about long-term demand.

## Margin performance and outlook

- EBITDA margin improved on account of R&D credit received during the quarter (100bp), improved utilization, efficiency improvements, and resizing of sales and support staff.
- Pyramid rationalization, optimized onsite mix and lower sub-contractor expenses helped ZENT reduce the delivery cost.

- The management indicated that current savings from SG&A will be re-invested for growth.
- The company gave wage hikes at the start of July. The wage hikes were lower compared to last year amid a challenging demand environment.
- ZENT expects to maintain margins in the mid-teens going forward and re-invest above that levels for growth.

Exhibit 1: Emerging vertical saw a sharp drop

Verticals	Contribution to revenue (%)	Growth QoQ (CC)
Hi-Tech	26.2	(3.5)
Manufacturing	12.4	(1.8)
Insurance	16.1	(3.5)
Banking	20.9	10.2
Consumer Services	17.7	10.3
Emerging	6.7	(7.3)

Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 2: Europe was up 7.4% QoQ

Geographies	Contribution to revenue (%)	Growth QoQ (USD)
North America	69.4	(0.1)
Europe	19.2	7.4
Africa	11.4	(0.5)

Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 3: DFS drove the growth in 1QFY24

Service lines	Contribution to revenue (%)	Growth QoQ (USD)
Digital & Application Services (DAS)	81.7	0.1
Digital Foundation Services (DFS)	18.3	2.2

Source: Company, MOFSL

# Valuation and view

- The weakening global environment and worsening economic conditions in key economies are adding to the challenges faced by the company in near- to medium-term growth recovery.
- The stock is trading at 18x (FY25E), in line with its small-cap peers. We believe ZENT's growth story is already factored into the price and it is trading at full valuation, leaving limited upside potential from its current level. Maintain Neutral.

**Exhibit 4: Revisions to our estimates** 

	Revised	estimate	Earlier	estimate	Change (%)		
	FY24E	FY25E	FY24E	FY25E	FY24E	FY25E	
USD:INR	82.1	82.0	82.2	82.2	-0.2%	-0.2%	
Revenue (USD m)	621	698	622	701	-0.2%	-0.5%	
Growth (%)	2.7	12.4	2.9	12.8	-20bps	-30bps	
EBIT margin (%)	13.3	12.8	11.5	11.9	190bps	90bps	
PAT (INR m)	5,510	5,963	4,753	5,533	15.9%	7.8%	
EPS	24.1	26.1	20.9	24.3	15.6%	7.4%	

Source: Company, MOFSL

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**Exhibit 5: Operating metrics** 

	1QFY22	2QFY22	3QFY22	4QFY22	1QFY23	2QFY23	3QFY23	4QFY23	1QFY24
Geographic mix (%)									
USA	70	70	71	70	71	72	70	70	69
Europe	18	18	18	19	18	17	19	18	19
RoW	12	12	11	11	11	11	11	12	11
Service Mix (%)									
Application Management Services	85	85	82	82	82	80	81	83	82
Infrastructure Management Services	15	15	18	18	18	20	19	17	18
Revenue by delivery (%)									
Onsite	58	58	58	56	58	57	55	54	52
Offshore	42	43	42	44	42	43	45	46	48
Client concentration (%)									
Top five	38	35	34	33	33	35	32	34	34
Top six to 10	11	12	13	13	12	11	13	12	11
Top 10	49	47	47	46	45	46	45	46	45
Top 11-20	14	15	14	16	16	15	17	15	17
Top 20	64	62	61	62	61	61	61	61	62
Number of clients (USD m)									
Over USD1m	79	85	81	83	86	87	87	84	87
Over USD5m	24	26	25	27	26	28	28	29	29
Over USD10m	8	10	11	11	13	13	15	14	14
Over USD20m	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Client metrics									
Number of active clients	135	143	144	147	147	146	148	148	147
Employee metrics									
Total headcount	9,512	10,375	10,641	11,839	11,559	11,250	10,845	10,563	10,540
Gross employees added during the period	1,508	1,545	1,416	2,331	1,220	1,194	593	552	654
Utilization	80.4	83.3	79.9	81.5	80.7	80.7	77.6	81.4	82.5
Attrition	18.1	23.2	26.7	27.9	28.1	26.3	22.8	19.8	15.9

Source: Company, MOFSL

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# **Financials and valuations**

**Application of Funds** 

Income Statement								(INR m)
Y/E March	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
Sales	30,058	38,988	40,102	36,681	42,437	48,483	50,936	57,242
Change (%)	(1.6)	29.7	2.9	(8.5)	15.7	14.2	5.1	12.4
Cost of Services	21,220	27,626	28,756	24,417	29,214	35,000	34,052	38,115
SG&A Expenses	5,254	6,283	6,310	5,422	6,659	7,960	8,321	9,788
EBITDA	3,583	5,079	5,037	6,842	6,564	5,523	8,564	9,338
As a percentage of Net Sales	11.9	13.0	12.6	18.7	15.5	11.4	16.8	16.3
Depreciation	651	894	1,567	1,732	1,849	1,830	1,776	2,003
Interest	227	373	605	536	354	278	253	286
Other Income	202	502	435	367	907	642	898	1,009
Forex	463	291	449	-113	470	386	5	0
PBT	3,370	4,604	3,749	4,828	5,738	4,443	7,437	8,058
Tax	1,013	1,310	1,038	1,261	1,525	1,166	1,927	2,095
Rate (%)	30.1	28.5	27.7	26.1	26.6	26.2	25.9	26.0
Minority Interest	50	51	82	70	53	0	0	0
Net Income	2,306	3,243	2,629	3,497	4,160	3,277	5,510	5,963
Change (%)	-1.8	40.6	-18.9	33.0	19.0	-21.2	68.1	8.2
Balance Sheet								(INR m)
Y/E March	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
Share Capital	450	450	451	451	452	453	453	453
Reserves	16,239	18,973	20,900	23,423	26,417	29,309	32,240	35,413
Net Worth	16,689	19,424	21,351	23,874	26,869	29,762	32,693	35,866
Loans	60	2,578	2,886	-	0	0	0	0
Other liabilities	906	924	4,008	3,526	3,544	2,866	2,866	2,866
Capital Employed	17,655	22,925	28,244	27,401	30,413	32,628	35,560	38,732
Net Block	5,976	9,617	13,340	11,330	12,858	11,735	10,759	9,555
Other LT Assets	2,356	1,898	2,039	3,076	3,226	6,291	6,358	6,529
Curr. Assets	14,624	19,360	20,576	19,928	22,628	23,184	27,244	32,526
Current Investments	1,302	454	2,670	7,410	5,141	7,045	9,045	11,045
Inventories	1,060	985	941	0	0	0	0	0
Debtors	6,423	8,762	6,656	5,888	7,967	7,298	8,373	9,410
Cash and Bank Balance	5,137	3,259	5,258	3,492	5,054	4,744	5,521	7,234
Other Current Assets	702	5,901	5,051	3,138	4,466	4,097	4,304	4,837
Current Liab. and Prov.	5,301	7,951	7,711	6,933	8,299	8,582	8,801	9,878
Trade payables	1,839	3,010	2,650	2,201	3,164	2,772	2,697	3,019
Other liabilities	3,461	4,941	5,061	4,732	5,135	5,810	6,104	6,860
Net Current Assets	9,323	11,409	12,865	12,994	14,329	14,602	18,443	22,647
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22,925

17,655

28,244

27,401

30,413

32,628

35,560

38,732

# **Financials and valuations**

Ratios Y/E March	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
EPS	10.1	14.3	11.7	15.3	18.3	14.4	24.1	26.1
Cash EPS	13.0	18.2	18.6	22.9	26.5	22.4	31.9	34.9
Book Value	74.2	86.3	96.3	105.7	119.0	131.5	144.4	158.4
DPS	7.0	2.8	2.8	6.4	5.0	5.0	9.7	10.5
Payout (%)	69.0	19.6	24.0	41.8	27.3	34.8	40.4	40.4
Valuation (x)								
P/E ratio	46.6	33.2	40.5	30.9	25.8	32.9	19.6	18.1
Cash P/E ratio	36.4	26.0	25.4	20.7	17.9	21.1	14.8	13.6
EV/EBITDA ratio	27.9	20.7	19.8	14.0	14.7	17.2	10.8	9.5
EV/Sales ratio	3.3	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.6
Price/Book Value ratio	6.4	5.5	4.9	4.5	4.0	3.6	3.3	3.0
Dividend Yield (%)	1.5	0.6	0.6	1.4	1.1	1.1	2.1	2.2
Profitability Ratios (%)								
RoE	14.7	18.0	12.9	15.5	16.4	11.6	17.6	17.4
RoCE	12.5	15.3	10.6	14.1	12.0	8.6	14.8	14.6
Turnover Ratios								
Debtors (Days)	78	82	61	59	69	55	60	60
Fixed Asset Turnover (x)	5.7	5.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.9	4.5	5.6
Cash Flow Statement								(INR m)
Y/E March	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
CF from Operations	3,298	4,183	4,508	5,432	5,774	5,030	6,637	7,243
Cash for Working Capital	-1,385	-2,622	2,354	3,148	-2,427	2,113	-1,130	-663
Net Operating CF	1,913	1,561	6,862	8,580	3,347	7,143	5,507	6,580
Net Purchase of FA	-515	-517	-781	-393	-373	-334	-800	-800
Free Cash Flow	1,398	1,043	6,081	8,187	2,974	6,809	4,707	5,780
Net Purchase of Invest.	-1,050	-1,894	-2,372	-4,890	400	-4,941	-1,097	-991
Net Cash from Invest.	-1,565	-2,411	-3,153	-5,283	27	-5,275	-1,897	-1,791
Proc. from equity issues	26	14	15	15	32	4	0	0
Proceeds from LTB/STB	-922	-376	-502	-4,505	-1,260	-1,058	-253	-286
Dividend Payments	-626	-633	-1,228	-271	-881	-1,132	-2,579	-2,791
Cash Flow from Fin.	-1,522	-995	-1,714	-4,761	-2,109	-2,186	-2,832	-3,077
Exchange difference	315	-32	4	-20	14	8	0	0
Net Cash Flow	-859	-1,877	1,999	-1,483	1,279	-310	777	1,712
Opening Cash Bal.	5,996	5,137	3,259	5,258	3,775	5,054	4,744	5,521
Add: Net Cash	-859	-1,877	1,999	-1,483	1,279	-310	777	1,712
Closing Cash Bal.	5,137	3,259	5,258	3,775	5,054	4,744	5,521	7,233

Investment in securities market are subject to market risks. Read all the related documents carefully before investing

# NOTES

Explanation of Investment Rating		
Investment Rating	Expected return (over 12-month)	
BUY	>=15%	
SELL	< - 10%	
NEUTRAL	< - 10 % to 15%	
UNDER REVIEW	Rating may undergo a change	
NOT RATED	We have forward looking estimates for the stock but we refrain from assigning recommendation	

\*In case the recommendation given by the Research Analyst is inconsistent with the investment rating legend for a continuous period of 30 days, the Research Analyst shall be within following 30 days take appropriate measures to make the recommendation consistent with the investment rating legend.

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